## Colorado State Conservation Board 2007 Matching Grants Project: Burlington Conservation District: Windbreak Project

## What natural resource problem(s) did the project address?

The wide-open spaces of the eastern Colorado plains are subject to frequent wind which can blow valuable topsoil away, increase energy use around homes, and expose livestock to the worst of winter weather. At the local Republican River watershed workgroup meeting, the health of old windbreaks and reduction in new installations was identified as a concern. The Burlington District has a history of helping landowners install "living windbreaks" - carefully sited lines of trees - to combat the soil erosion and other problems associated with wind. Recent drought years have not been encouraging to new tree survival rates. Dry years have also taken a toll on existing windbreaks which have lost high percentages of their trees because of lack of moisture and problems with early weed barrier materials that are restricting tree growth.

Burlington Conservation District identified small acreage landowners, not eligible for federal cost-share, as a population that could benefit from more windbreak installation to control soil erosion, provide enhanced wildlife habitat and provide livestock protection. They offered cost-share to plant new or renovate old windbreaks for these landowners.

## What was achieved?

- 30 acres of new windbreaks established and old windbreaks renovated.
- Weed barrier and drip irrigation offered as part of the cost-share package to maximize tree establishment and growth of new windbreaks
- 23 of 27 eligible projects funded with maximum of \$1,000 cost-share per project
- Landowners assisted by Colorado Division of Wildlife and Pheasants Forever to select plant species that best benefit wildlife - and the Natural Resources Conservation Services for design planning for maximum windbreak effectiveness. Education and technical help also supported by CSU Extension Services
- District provided trees, weed barrier, drip irrigation supplies and equipment rental to help landowners establish windbreaks.
- All projects to be spot checked in a year to ensure proper establishment





Tree windbreaks help mitigate the soil erosion and other impacts of prairie winds.

Weed barrier and drip irrigation boost the establishment of windbreak trees in the semiarid drought-prone climate of eastern Colorado.